

If they shit in your
sandbox

The Gateway

Take the sand
away.
— Sid Stephen

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Editorialized fact

The referendum wording benefits Students' Council, not students

The referendum, which is taking place today, for a students' union fee increase for next year is largely a lie and is not in the best interests of the students.

The ballot, which appears opposite, does not make provision for several alternatives and mis-informs the students on several points.

It does not give the students the option of refusing a fee increase as well as forcing students' council to re-arrange their priorities within the present budget limitations. There is no mention of the Secretariat proposal which would cost the students' union \$17,000. If the Secretariat proposal is rescinded, the saving would allow for an operating budget for CKSR, Art Gallery and Photo Directorate.

There is only mention, in the referendum ballot, of CKSR-FM. There is no mention of simply a decent budget for the radio station to operate at its present level.

CKSR was given, in the preliminary budget, \$2,200. This is not enough to operate. The station needs about \$5,000 more to continue. If they are not allowed to continue operation at their current level, there is little chance they will ever get an FM licence.

Three years ago, a referendum was held for a SU fee increase. Students voted to pay an additional \$3 specifically for SUB expansion. It was made clear, during that referendum, that part of this money was to go to CKSR for FM. This money is now being spent (loaned over a number of years) for a Day Care Centre and for the Housing project.

The part of the referendum on CKSR-FM is a repeat of the referendum held three years ago.

Assuming that the SU will not (or cannot because of

commitments to HUB) allow the SUB expansion money to go to CKSR, the \$5 fee increase for the FM licence is *not* necessary.

The \$5 is only necessary for capital expense for the first year of such an operation. The capital expense will diminish in succeeding years. As well, much of the initial expense could be paid back through the rental of the FM facilities.

The Art Gallery last year operated on a net deficit of \$16,000. Their budget proposal for the next year included a higher deficit, probably close to the \$20,000 mentioned on the referendum ballot.

However, \$20,000 is probably not necessary to operate the Art Gallery. The Art Gallery people have indicated they could have suggested cuts to this figure if they had been aware of the present SU budget problems. However, the people (the outgoing and incoming SU executives) who drew up the budget didn't consult any of the people involved in organizations affected by the budget cuts.

They didn't explain the situation to any of us even though some of us had asked to be able to explain our proposed expenditures to them while they were drawing up the budget.

We wonder why no mention of Photo Directorate is on the referendum. Photo has been re-organized by students' council (again without consultation with anyone who knew anything about it) to such an extent to make it impossible for the organization to operate.

We wonder what the "flexibility to initiate new programs", which appears on the referendum along with a \$2 increase, means. They have never explained, to any of us, what these "new programs" would be.

The students' council is telling us that, if we want to maintain existing services, we will have to vote for a fee increase.

We maintain that the only act necessary to continue existing services at a decent level is to repeal the proposal for a secretariat. The Secretariat is a new, rather nebulous, idea — the services which have been cut have been involving and providing services to substantial numbers of students for many years. The Secretariat is a pet project of the SU executive.

The students' council says the Secretariat would help co-ordinate SU lobbying efforts on such things as tenure and class size and that this would provide needed service to the students. We maintain it is more important to actively involve students in SU projects and that the SU executive is paid to perform the functions they envision for the Secretariat.

We realize the SU is experiencing some financial problems and that a small fee increase may be beneficial. A fee increase would probably be necessary for CKSR-FM because of our commitments to HUB.

However, the wording of the referendum is **blackmail**. We want the students' union to re-arrange their priorities. We want them to cut down on bureaucratic expense and maintain services which directly involve students.

The students' union executive has worded this referendum in such a way that, regardless of the outcome, they will not be mandated to re-arrange priorities.

Given the above, we propose that students write-in a number 6 on the ballot stating that: I wish to maintain the existing services at last year's operational level and to cut out the Secretariat proposal and other bureaucratic expense. (I realize this means no increase in fees).

The only other reasonable alternative is to spoil a ballot which is obviously absurd and smells of railroad tracks.

THIS IS A PREFERENTIAL BALLOT

1. I want a CKSR "FM" radio station with
 - a) an initial capital cost of \$72,000
 - b) operating cost of \$16,000 plus per year.(I realize this means a fee increase of \$5.00) ☐
2. I want an Art Gallery at an operating cost of \$20,000 per year.
(I realize this means a fee increase of \$2.00)
N.B. This does not concern the Music Listening Room which was not cut from the budget and will remain in any event. ☐
3. I want both CKSR/FM and an Art Gallery.
(I realize this means a fee increase of \$7.00) ☐
4. I want the Students' Union to have the flexibility to initiate new programmes.
(I realize this means a fee increase of \$2.00) ☐
5. I wish to maintain the status quo and the proposed budget cuts.
(I realize this means no increase in fees) ☐

This is the ballot for today's referendum. They should have included:

6. I wish to maintain the existing services at last year's operational level and to cut out the Secretariat proposal and other bureaucratic expense. (I realize this means no increase in fees).

Contrary to popular belief

The general meeting did have a quorum

Members of the U of A students' union were screwed yesterday.

More than 1,600 students attended the General Meeting yesterday to discuss the students' union preliminary budget which was passed by the previous students' council and ratified Monday by the new council. This budget virtually closes SUB Art Gallery, Student Radio, and Photo Directorate.

A quorum of students at this meeting could have rescinded any motion passed in council (including the preliminary budget) and could have recommended alternatives to council. A quorum for such a meeting is 10 per cent of the full members of the students' union.

Our elected students' council representatives told those students in attendance at the meeting that they had not reached quorum. However, they were probably either mistaken or lying.

A quorum is *not* 1,800 students as they informed us. A quorum is considerably less. The Gateway had also misinformed the students that the magic number was 1,800 — 10 per cent of 18,000.

However there are *not* 18,000 full members of the students' union. Many have only associate membership and are ineligible to vote. As well, the dropout rate from the university has probably considerably diminished the number of full members.

We have been unable to discover the exact number of

full members, however, we can roughly calculate it.

The students' union received approximately \$514,000 in student fees. Membership fees for a full member are about \$31 (excluding UAB fees). This membership fee divided into the total revenue equals approximately 16,500 people. However, many students (we don't know exactly how many) do not pay the full fee. Therefore, there are less than 16,500 full members of the students' union.

Therefore, quorum was probably reached at yesterday's meeting. The students in attendance at the meeting could have, by a two-thirds majority, rescinded the preliminary budget. They could also have, by a simple majority, made recommendations to students' council.

The students councillors, and the SU executive, if they had been trying to represent students, would have determined the exact number necessary for quorum and would have told the students in attendance that quorum had in fact been reached and motions could have been passed. The Gateway is also negligent in not investigating and reporting to the students the number necessary.

This was the only general meeting in recent history to have achieved a quorum and it demonstrates that students are concerned about SU budget priorities.

Students at the general meeting wanted services not secretariat

Even though they said quorum had not been reached at yesterday's general meeting, students' council opened the floor to discussion.

It was obvious, throughout the meeting, that students in attendance wanted to retain CKSR, Art Gallery, and Photo Directorate and wanted the Secretariat proposal rescinded.

CKSR director, Dick McLeish, and students' council arts rep, Mark Priegert, received overwhelming support when they asked the students to choose these services over the Secretariat. McLeish asked for a straw vote and probably received over 90 per cent support for the services, as opposed to the Secretariat, from the meeting.

At the beginning of the meeting SU president, Gerry Riskin, was asked the total amount of the SU executive

salaries. He replied that a year's total was about \$16,000. "Isn't that enough to finance the Art Gallery?" the questioner replied.

The SU executive repeatedly stressed that the Secretariat proposal was for Academic affairs — for things like lobbying with the administration on issues of interest to students. In reply, it was pointed out that the issue at stake was not a choice between Academic affairs and other services but between existing services and increased bureaucratic costs.

Members of the audience argued that it was not in the students' interest to hire professionals to do their lobbying for them but that it was the responsibility of the students' union to provide means of involving students in these issues as well as in service-oriented organizations.

Riskin explained that the Secretariat proposal would benefit students in the area of lobbying with the administration, in providing co-ordination of the student reps on General Faculties Council, and in providing continuity between SU executives from year to year.

Members of the audience replied that they did not want professionals hired to do the lobbying at the expense of services. Many thought it was really the job of the students' union executive.

Two student reps on GFC told those in attendance that they didn't want to be co-ordinated by the students' union. It was pointed out that all the student positions on GFC had not yet been filled and "why co-ordinate something that isn't even there?"

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VOTE NUMBER 6

At the last minute . . .

The Honest Broker rides again!

The following letter was brought into our offices at 5:30 p.m. yesterday by Gerry Riskin and Rob Spragins. This was after they discovered we were putting out some kind of rush paper on the referendum.

Presumably, the following is a response to the obvious antagonism displayed by the general students' meeting yesterday towards the budget priorities. As such, the following is a good-looking promise of future action. But then, during the election campaign, Mr. Riskin promised that he would never allow the Art Gallery to shut down and that he would never allow a decrease in CKSR's operating budget.

But Mr. Riskin's budget proposals are not what is at issue here. The main issue involved and the point behind this special issue of the Gateway is the arrogance and utter disregard for student choice and intelligence demonstrated by a students' union executive and council that would place such an insulting referendum ballot before the students while saying that they were honestly trying to ascertain student opinion.

Therefore, we feel that the proper course would be to ignore the "choices" offered you by Students' Council on your referendum ballot and write—in the sixth alternative listed in this paper.

We will have plenty of time to determine Mr. Riskin's sincerity next Monday night and next year.

The following proposal should not affect voting in the referendum. The following should have been included in the referendum and wasn't. Students have not been asked to vote on the following and should not take it into consideration when voting in the referendum.

Students:

Despite the fact that today's assembly failed to achieve quorum, there were well over 1,500 students there who indicated in no uncertain way that services were of higher priority than Academic Affairs. Students felt that we were building a bureaucracy at the expense of services. We feel that there is a compelling argument for having a Secretariat in light of the Tenure debate, the U. of A. budget debate and the problem of continuation from one executive to another. These arguments did not find acceptance with concerned students. We had an opinion which we felt had a solid foundation of support and logic behind it but we are not benevolent dictators or bureaucracy builders, we are here to serve you.

We will move the following motion at Monday night's council meeting:

That Art Gallery remain open staffed by volunteers while other sources of finance are investigated and that Photodirectorate as it has in the past provided they show a breakeven budget and that CKSR be given enough money to continue its operation as well as to maintain the background information required for an FM licence application and that the Secretariat Proposal be deleted.

(Art Gallery will continue as it has in the past if students vote to increase fees for that purpose and CKSR will go FM if fees are raised for that purpose. There is the possibility of both these occurring.)

Signed,

Gerald A. Riskin (Pres.)

Robert F. Spragins (Exec. V.P.)

Gateway reacts . . . again

This special issue of The Gateway is probably the last Gateway this year (we've said that in the previous two papers) and is (as we have said before) probably the last truly free Gateway.

This special issue is in direct reaction to the referendum in progress today. We decided to publish after a student who had voted in the advance poll came to our office to complain about the wording of the referendum. We had no forewarning of the wording.

When someone at the general meeting asked the executive the wording of the referendum Gerry Riskin replied that he couldn't remember. Immediately after the meeting the advance poll was in progress.

Our problems in publishing this issue were compounded when Riskin and Spragins appeared in our offices and gave us the motion which appears in this paper. They were also compounded by their informing us that a separate sheet will be distributed with the ballots today saying that the fee increase for CKSR-FM is only necessary for one year. This was not distributed with the advance poll ballots but was only written after the CKSR people complained to the executive. We wonder why the people concerned with the organizations affected by the referendum were not consulted before the ballots were made up.

We are publishing this issue because we feel we have a responsibility to explain to the students why we and the people involved in the affected organizations think the referendum is a form of blackmail.

By the way, the Gateway staff is publishing their own paper next year and need help. Any inquiries or offers of assistance (either monetary or otherwise) will be answered if sent to: The Harvey G. Thomgirt Publishing Society at 10931 — 84 st. We hope soon to have our own offices either on or near campus and we will then publish the address and phone number.



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